

Message Text

PAGE 01 CANBER 04682 220832Z

15
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
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R 220805Z AUG 73
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1542
INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMLIAISON OFFICE PEKING 0008
AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 4682

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, AS, CB
SUBJECT: GOA REFUSAL TO GRANT ACCREDITATION TO CAMBODIAN
AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE CHHUT CHHOEUR

1. MAIN PURPORT OF NEWLY ARRIVED CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR CHHUT CHHOEUR'S CALL ON ME AUGUST 22 WAS TO SAY THAT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS POSTPONED INDEFINITELY HIS PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS EVEN THOUGH AGREEMENT WAS ACCORDED HIM ON JUNE 26 AND HE ARRIVED HERE JULY 30.

2. SEVERAL DAYS AGO HE WAS CALLED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WHERE AN EMBARRASSED ACTING HEAD OF DFA (MICK SHANN) SAID THAT PRIMIN HAD DECIDED TO DEFER INDEFINITELY RECEIPT OF HIS CREDENTIALS, WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE AUGUST 22, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA WAS TOO UNCERTAIN AND GOA WISHED TO AWAIT OUTCOME OF CAMBODIAN DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WITH CREDENTIALS CEREMONY.

3. MEANWHILE, AMBASSADOR CHHUT CHHOEUR HAS LEARNED FROM DICK WOOLCOTT, FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF SOUTH ASIAN DIVISION, DFA, THAT AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR IN PEKING (FITZGERALD) HAS RECENTLY MET THREE TIMES WITH PENN NOUTH, ALTHOUGH WOOLCOTT REFUSED TO DISCUSS PURPOSE OR CONTENT OF THESE MEETINGS EXCEPT CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CANBER 04682 220832Z

TO SAY THAT AUSTRALIA WAS NOT PLAYING ANY MEDIATOR ROLE IN CAMBODIAN AFFAIRS. ALL THIS LEAVES CHHUT CHHOEUR IN A QUANDRY AS TO HOW TO PROCEED. HE SPECIFICALLY ASKED SHANN WHETHER AUSTRALIA WOULD RECEIVE HIS CREDENTIALS IF, AFTER A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME,

IT WAS CLEAR THAT PHNOM PENH'S PROSPECTS FOR HOLDING OUT WERE GOOD. SHANN MERELY REPLIED THAT THIS WAS A MATTER FOR THE PRIMIN TO DECIDE.

4. WITH CONSIDERABLE JUSTIFICATION, CHHUT CHHOEUR REMARKED THAT THIS WAS A PRETTY SHABBY WAY TO TREAT AN AMBASSADOR WHOSE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN RECEIVED AND WHEN AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR JOHNSTON CONTINUED TO RECEIVE ALL DIPLOMATIC COURTESIES IN PHNOM PENH. ON LATTER SCORE, CHHUT CHHOEUR COMMENTED THAT AUSTRALIAN REFUSAL TO RECEIVE HIS CREDENTIALS AT THIS TIME SEEMED TO BE MOTIVATED BY GOA DESIRE TO BE ON THE "RIGHT SIDE" IN CASE THINGS TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE IN CAMBODIA, INCLUDING THREATS TO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PERSONNEL THERE.

5. COMMENT: IT IS PARTICULARLY REGRETTABLE THAT GOA HAS TAKEN THIS STAND SINCE CHHUT CHHOEUR IS A HIGHLY ARTICULATE, EFFECTIVE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT AND A MAN WHO, IF HE COULD HAVE ACCREDITATION AND ACCESS TO AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS AND OTHERS, WOULD BE AN ENLIGHTENING FACTOR ON THIS SCENE. I AM NOT SURE OF ALL THE FACTORS INVOLVED IN THIS SITUATION AND WOULD APPRECIATE SOONEST ANY INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT COULD SUPPLY.
GREEN

CONFIDENTIAL

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